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ABSTRACT

This document is a booklet designed primarily for high school students by the American Federation of Teachers on teaching as a career. The booklet discusses the following topics: the history of teaching as a profession; the state of schools in the United States; advantages and disadvantages to teaching; teachers in revolt (collective bargaining and teacher's role in social change); high school student's preparation for becoming a teacher; preparation for teaching as preparation for allied careers, certification; and salary averages. There is a 32-item bibliography of books for further reading. (JA)

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The State of the Schools

The Oldest Profession

A Great Leap Forward

The Bright Side of Teaching

Teachers in Revolt

... And the Other Side

Can You Become a Good Teacher?

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13 Preparing Yourself

Maybe Not Teaching, But . . . 5

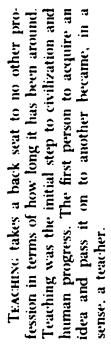
'How Do I Find a Job?'

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'How's the Pay?'

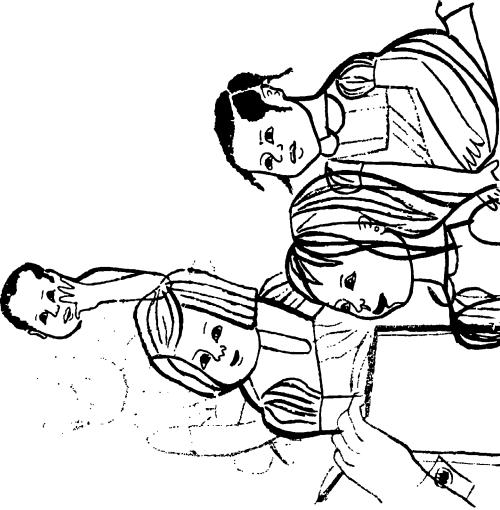
For Further Reading Z

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One of the first records of a teacher, in the modern sense, was found inscribed on 4,000 year-old cuneiform tablets unearthed in Iraq. It told the story of a student being "passed" by a teacher after the teacher was given clothing and "wined and dined" by the boy's father.

Teaching—the transmission of knowledge, one to another — was later well organized by the Greeks and Romans. The rich academic atmosphere of ancient Athens and other Greek cities has been well described by historians. Students from the enare Western World flocked to their philospher-teachers who imparted their wisdom to the young. In China, too, education flourished, and important contributions to art and science came from the wandering teachers of the Orient.





And in Africa, the universities of Sangkore and at Timbuktu were important scats of learning. Later, during the Dark Ages, learning in Westerr. Europe was confined to the monasteries, and though love of inquiry and knowledge blossomed during the Renaissance, it was still limited to people in the privileged classes. Today, in many countries, remnants of this tradition remain, and higher education is provided chiefly for those in higher income brackets. In some nations in Europe, an elitist system of education exists, where students are separated by tests given at an early age into college preparatory, vocational, or general tracks.

For a half-century after the American Revolution, efforts to establish free public schools in the United States met with fierce opposition from many authorities. What few schools there were included a handful of private institutions for the children of the vertich, and a sprinkling of "poor schools" to wheelew self-respecting parents would send them. "The concept of free public education for the masses was considered a "dangerous" idea.

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During the presidential term of Andrew Jackson, the first creakings of change began to be heard. The political arm of the early trade union movement, the Working Men's Party, called for free public schools in its platform of 1828. Finally, a little more than a century ago, the first public schools in the United States were established in Philadelphia at the insistence of groups of working people seeking a better life for their children. Meanwhile, men such as James G. Carter and Horace Mann worked in their home state of Massachusetts to establish tax-supported schools. That state's pioneer legislation became a pattern, eventually, for the rest of the country.

Our public tax-supported school systems were a radical idea when first proposed. Even today, some Americans do not understand that public support of education for everyone is necessary to our nation's general welfare. This shows most graphically when requests by local school districts for tax increases for education are voted down. Many Americans do not yet appreciate education as an essential ingredient of the good life as much as they do new homes or new cars.



EDUCATION in the United States today is basically the responsibility of the individual states. Each local community or school district controls its own educational system within the laws of the state.

Because of these wide differences among the 50 states, such things as compulsory school leaving age, the amount of money the state contributes to each child's education, and the opportunities for state-supported education beyond the high school, vary widely from state to state. State educational requirements for teacher certification also show wide variance. In some areas, for example, teachers are hired even though they have only two years or less of college. In other areas, achievement of a master's degree is an employment requirement.

Because of the lack of equal educational opportunity for children in many places, the federal government is taking an increasing interest in education. Congress has appropriated millions of dollars in recent years to help local school districts improve teaching facilities. Money to

establish preschool programs, known as Project Head Start, and other programs to raise the level of educational opportunity has been appropriated. The role of the federal government in education will probably be strengthened unless states and local school districts act themselves to correct educational deficiencies.

The 16.500 operating public school districts in the United States and the nation's colleges and universities together employ 3,145,000 teachers. Another 212,000 are employed by private schools.

Public school enrollment in this country has been increasing 1.9 percent annually. A greater proportion of the school-age population is actually in school than at any earlier time in our history, and this situation is bound to increase as more and more of people recognize today's demands for measurements.

EDUCATION IN AMERICA is a "growth industry." There are going to be more young people to educate, and the quality and quantity of education they will require is going to increase.

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Some of the effects these demands on our schools will probably have in the future include the lengthened school year, greater opportunities for education before kindergarten and after high school, increased expectations regarding teacher preparation, and so on.

Already, changes and experiments—such as team teaching, flexible scheduling, core classes, and instruction by radio and TV—can be seen in many schools, perhaps the one which you attend. The value of many of these innovations is vet to be proven, but the simple fact that they exist indicates the vitality with which the education profession faces its problems.

Young people planning to become teachers today will find that the challenges, opportunities, and educational changes to come will help make teaching a vital, exciting profession.

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THE STATES OF TEACHERS IN echication and in the community is increasing along with the acknowledged importance of better education to the welfare of the nation and its individual estizens.

Security in employment, or teacher tenure, is provided by law in 35 states, and in eight other similar tenure plans of their own. Such laws do states certain districts have tenure laws. In most cases, these laws provide that, after two or three years empleyment, a teacher cannot be discharged without good cause. In states not having such laws, some school districts have adopted not protect the bad teacher, as critics often charge. Teachers who are incompetent can be dismissed. Tenure laws simply provide that when a teacher is fired, the traditional demoof appeat to a higher authority are implemented. in the pase teachers were often fired because of a principal's petty gripe, or because they became teachers, because they married. The value of enure laws can be illustrated by an example Illinois teacher was threatened with dismissal cratic methods of a fair hearing and the right involved in politics, or, in the case of women rom Illinois, where, as recently as 1966, an because he wouldn't shave off his mustache! Teachers find that the stimulation of young people, new ideas, new books, and colleagues with similar interests make their profession an



attractive one. The opportunities to continue to learn are ever-present. Teachers often use their summer vacation time for further study or travel.

Teacher salaries have been increasing in recent years, primarily through efforts made by organized teachers in the American Federation of Teachers. However, teacher salaries still lag behind those of any other profession requiring comparable training and experience, with the exception of the ministry.

Rem:nneration and opportunities for advancement in teaching are generally equal for men and women. Such economic benefits as paid sick leave, hospitalization insurance, and pension plans have been growing in importance and scope as teachers have demanded their expansion. The American Federation of Teachers has been very successful in securing such benefits for the teachers it represents.

SOME OF THE disadvantages in teaching are the result of being employed, at least in our larger cities, by what are often unwieldy and inflexible bureaucracies. Many decisions about education





are made at administrative levels far removed from the classroom teacher, and teachers often feel such decisions are not the best for their individual teaching situations.

Another source of problems in teaching is the fact that teachers are public employees, responsible not only to their superiors, but to the community as a whole, Communities differ in what they expect of teachers and in the importance they attach to the teacher's work. Many school boards often simply reflect the conservative nature of their communities, preferring to take a "don't-rock-the-boat" attitude rather than to evert educational leadership.

In some school districts, entering teachers are unable to choose the grade level or subject they wish to teach, but are placed where the district feels the need is greatest. New teachers cannot be assured of teaching in a school near their homes, and may be given overcrowded classes in schools where supplies, facilities, and services are not adequate for the pupils' needs.

In the many school districts which do not have adequate tenure provisions, teachers may be dis-

charged or disciplined in an arbitrary way for nowarranted reasons. They usually have no recourse other than to accept such actions or move to another school district. Other disadvantages may be inferred from the account of improvements listed in the previous section. One part of teaching most teachers strongly dislike is the many non-teaching chores they are often expected to perform. Such duties as lunchroom supervision, hall guard, filling out many reports, collecting money from students, and so on, should not be part of a teacher's job. In some districts school secretaries and teachers aides do this work, freeing the teacher to do the job of teaching. Perhaps the most serious disadvantage to teaching, for many persons, lies in the salaries paid teachers. This is discussed in detail

Remember Ichabod Crane? Or the stereotyped old-maid schoolmistress that you still see sometimes in the comic strips? Or the flutterbrained Miss Brooks? The bland Mr. Novak?



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Teachers, by and large, today fit none of these images. They are being propelled by a new dynamism and are working hard to eliminate the remaining disadvantages of teaching.

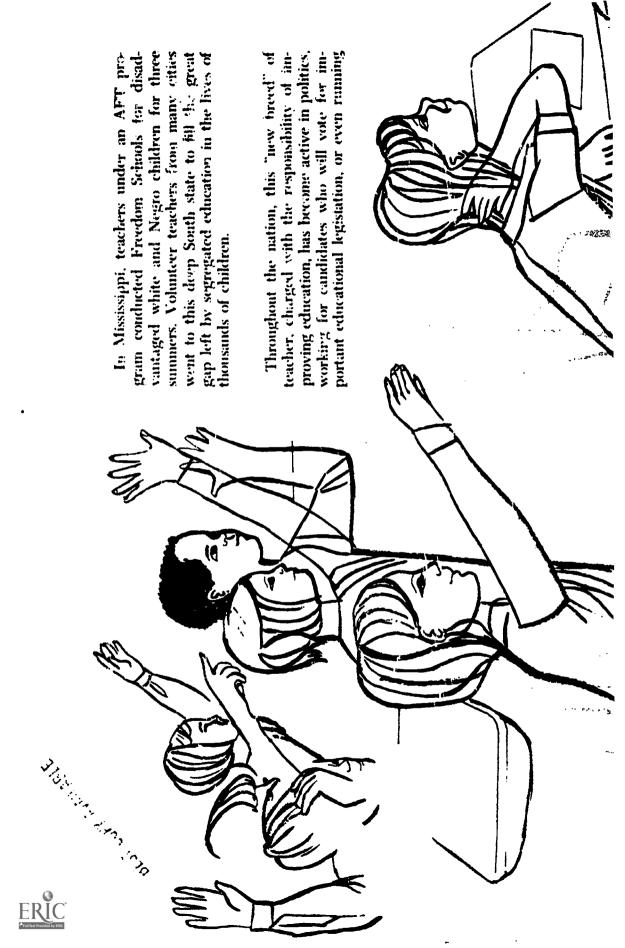
Teachers in hundreds of school districts 'awe demanded and won the right to collective bargaining. This means, simply, that they elect, by secret ballot, one organization to speak for them in negotiations with the school board over such matters as salaries, fringe benefits, and teaching and learning conditions in the schools. A written and signed master concract, guarantees certain rights, and policies to teachers and to the school board.

Where the American Federation of Teachers has been elected to speak for teachers, conditions in the school district have almost always shown great improvement, not only in economic gains for teachers, but in better conditions for students. Collective bargaining contracts now in effect provide, for example: that class sizes shall be limited, that textlooks and teaching materials which portray the Negro and other minority groups honestly are provided for students, that racial integration of the schools becomes a reality; and that an outside, neutral third party will

be called upon to resolve serious grievances by teachers against their employers. In other words, teachers, who for so long have been teaching about democracy from textbooks in their classrooms, are now practicing it in real life. Outside the area of collective bargaining, teachers have an opportunity to play an important role in the social changes which are now at work reshaping the nation.

The More Effective Schools program of the AFT, for example, was developed by teachers in New York City to revolutionize the kind of education which children in slum areas were getting. The AFT convinced the school board to increase the annual expenditure for students in 21 slum schools by \$215 and thus provide sharply reduced class sizes, more teachers, psychologists, reading specialists, and adequate learning supplies for thousands of children. The bighly successful program is now being introduced by AFT teachers to other school boards throughout the nation in the form of COMPAS (Comprehensive Program for American Schools) designs for elementary through community college.



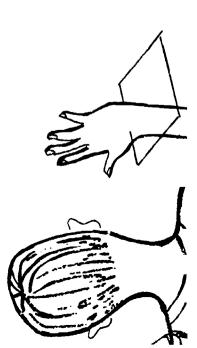


for office himself. He has participated in picket lines and demonstrations for better schools, and sometimes he has even been forced by backward school boards to go on strike. Psychologists and teacher educators have often wondered what kinds of men and women make the best teachers. A number of studies have been made on this subject, and one of the most interesting found that good teachers—those who

helped their students learn most, who enjoyed their pupils, and whose pupils enjoyed learning—have many different teaching "styles." You have probably found this true among teachers you have liked: not all of them teach the same way.

But there are some qualities in good teachers that nearly everyone agrees on. Good teachers are fair to their students, they are interested in ideas: they believe teaching and learning are important. They have a strong commitment to democracy and social progress. If you have these qualities, and if you teach in a school that provides adequate teaching supplies and a comfortable atmosphere, you will probably become a good teacher.

THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT Who wants to become a teacher should consult the school's guidance counselor and the teachers of the subject he hopes to teach, and should become active in groups such as the AFT's Student Federation of Teachers. The earlier such consultation is made, the better. Teachers today should have at least a





bachelor's degree from a college or university, and in some fields, and in some states, more advanced training is necessary. Good high school preparation is important.

Most large colleges and universities offer degrees in education leading to teacher certification. There are, also, colleges which are basically teacher training institutions. The choice of which kind to attend is up to you. Good teachers come from all types of institutions, but a student should know the requirements and oberings of several types of schools before making a choice.

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Many veteran teachers feel that some teacher training institutions offer or require more education courses than is really desirable, thus cutting down on the courses a student can take in his major and is other fields.

Tuition and living costs vary according to the college selected. These can be learned from the college catalogue. Many scholarships and special loan arrangements are available to young people who plan to become teachers. Your counselor, the college you select, or the many books on financial aid for college students will be helpful.

Some school districts give preference to graduates of colleges in their own areas. If you plan to teach in a particular district, you might inquire about this before choosing a college.

The level at which you wish to teach is deserving of some advance consideration, as well as the major field of study. Four years of accredited study is necessary for a bachelor's degree, with generally one additional year necessary for a master's. Students generally need at least two more years to obtain a doctorate.

Advanced degrees are often obtained by teachers in summer, night, or sabbatical year study. Some school districts require a certain number of graduate courses in a stated number of years for advancement on the salary schedule.

According to the United States Office of Education, in figures released in 1969, the average educational attainment of male school teachers in the United States was 17.0 years. This can be compared to 17.6 years for medical and other health workers. So, although these census figures applied only to males, they do indicate that the median school years completed for teachers is



only a few tenths of a year lower than that for medical personnel.

PREPARATION for teaching is usually also good preparation for allied careers, both inside various school systems and in other enterprises.

School librarians, school nurses (in some districts, they are called teacher-nurses), counselors, psychologists, attendance officers, and social workers are generally better prepared for their specialties if they have some teaching experience, and some school districts require that they have teac, ing certificates as well as other professional qualifications in their fields.

Some specialties in teaching itself include tenchers of trades and vocational subjects, teachers of retarded or handicapped children, of speech correction, and remedial reading.

Two areas of special interest today are teachers of disadvantaged children and teachers in early childhood education programs. Teachers of the disadvantaged may be effective teachers without special training, but the likelihood is great that their effectiveness is increased by such training. The field of early childhood education (prekindergarten), is also a rapidly expanding one, and one for which special training is definitely required.

Other specialized jobs in school systems, usually obtained on a promotional basis by teachers with the necessary additional education and training to fill them, are curriculum specialists and advisors of many types, who work out curriculum guides for teachers and assist them in presenting certain classroom subjects; community and "human relations" coordinators: public relations staffers, and experts in the use of audiovisual teaching aids.

Some jobs in large school systems which do not require a teaching certificate include those of school secretary, lab technician, and teacher aide. For these jobs, and all those listed above, stu-



dents would be wise to investigate fully the needs and requirements of the system or systems in which they plan to teach.

One of the booming fields outside of school systems which utilize persons with teaching education or experience is that of educational publishing. Similar job opportunities are to be found among the many producers and distributors of films, maps, models, and other materials used as classroom teaching aids.

The New Graduate Thacher has increasing difficulty obtaining a teaching position. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare estimated in the spring of 1973 that if present enrollment in schools of education continues, a million teachers will be out of work by 1978.

Conditions of employment are not uniform from district to district. Some districts accept a graduation certificate from an accredited college, while others require an examination. Requirements for securing state and district certification are also widely varied. If you prepare in one

state and plan to teach in another, you must know both the graduation requirements of the school you attend and the certification requirements of the state and district in which you plan to teach. It is important to remember that such requirements often change rapidly, and can do so in the middle of your college years.

In many areas, teaching certificates (licenses to teach) must be renewed at intervals of a stated number of vears.

A letter of inquiry to the state superintendent of schools will bring information promptly, in most cases, on certification requirements' and job opportunities. For a job in a specific school district, write to the superintendent of schools in that district for an application.

As noted before, teaching conditions vary widely from district to district. Here are some questions you might try to answer for yourself about the district in which you plan to teach:

1) Does the community support good education, both financially and through permitting teaching innovations and the full exercise of the individual teacher's professional and civil rights?





- 2) Are there challenges to the individual teacher that might appeal to you-if you are looking for challenges?
- 3) Are the employment conditions of the system what you feel are necessary? This might include a fair salary schedule, attractive fringe benefits, teacher tenure provisions, a worthwhile program for professional advancement including advancement while remaining in the classroom, and an adequate retirement plan.
- 4) Are other teaching conditions a reflection of a concern for a teacher's well-being and maximum professional performance? These might include provisions for a reasonable maximum class size, duty-free hinch periods, preparation periods for all teachers, provision of teacher aides for non-teaching chores, a program of prompt attention to students with serious discipline problems and other students who might have difficulty fitting into a regular classroom, provision of adequate textbooks and other teaching aids without delay, and proper desk, storage, and other necessary equip-

ment and facilities for all teachers.

any organization should be one left entirely to chossing a district in which to teach is the attiorganizations. In some districts, teachers are compelled to become members of the National Education Association and its affiliates. In these districts, and some others, the NEA groups are controlled by school administrators, rather than the teachers themselves, thus depriving teachers of a true voice in educational matters. The AFT believes that the choice of joining or not joining the individual teacher. Should any teacher organization prove, through a secret ballot election, that it represents a majority of the teachers in the as the sole spokesman for the teachers in the district in negotiating salary schedules, working One of the most important considerations in tude of the school administration toward teacher district, the AFT believes it should be recognized conditions, and settling grievances

how's the pay.

ALMOST EVERYBODY you meet agrees that teachers are underpaid—except those few vocal citi-



zens who speak unknowingly about a mythical "9 to 3" day, forgetting the countless out-of-school hours teachers spend on classroom preparation and paper-grading, and a two-month summer vacation, forgetting that teachers are not pand for this time.

The average salary of teachers in 1972-73, in all United States school districts, was approximately \$9,987. In districts of 25,000 or more enrollment, this average salary was about 3 percent higher or \$10,279.

1972-73 starting salaries ranged from a low of \$5.032 (B.A.) in Newberry, S.C. to \$9,571 in Chicago with an average of \$7,472 in 6,000 + student districts. Starting M.A. salaries averaged \$5,349, with a low of \$5,441 in Newberry, S.C. and a high of \$11,250 in New York City.

More than half of the teachers in the United States teach in the 1,410 districts having 6,000 or more students enrolled in the public schools. The average salary of teachers in all school systems enrolling over 6,000 pupils was \$10,090 a year.

The AFT reports that on the basis of state

averages, the lowest in the 1972-73 school year was Mississippi, with \$7.070; the highest, New York, with \$12.649. Other averages for selected states include: California, \$12,362; Illinois, \$11,550; Massachusetts, \$10,610; Minnesota, \$11,225; Pennsylvania, \$10,800; Louisiana, \$9,270, and Iowa, \$10,200.

A comparison of the salaries of union teachers (American Federation of Teachers members) and those of non-union teachers, made by the AFT Research Department appears on page 25.

Nevertheless, despite the work done by teachers and other concerned citizens in attempting to raise teacher salaries, the salaries are still low. On the basis of their educational preparation, the importance of the work they do, and the amount of time and effort they put into the successful performance of their duties, teachers are still woefully underpaid.

Several reasons have generally been advanced for the inadequacy of teacher salaries. Among these is the sheer cost of increasing salaries. There are approximately 2.1 million teachers in public elementary and secondary schools in the United States at this time. Teaching is, by far, the largest of the professions.

Another reason given is the percentage of women in the occupation. Women have traditionally been paid less than men, and public concern over giving them professional calaries has been hard to arouse. According to the U.S.O.E. in 1969, 86.9 percent of all public school teachers were women.

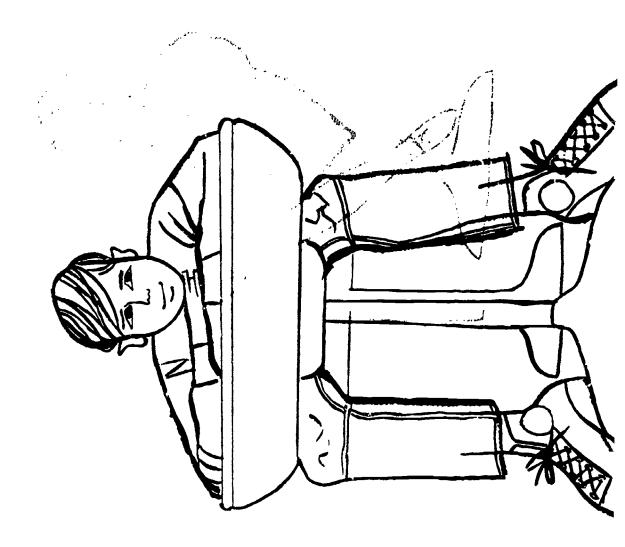
Still another reason for the historically low salaries for teachers is the recognition that most teachers feel a sense of dedication toward their jobs. However, the public has not felt that a similar sense of dedication by, perhaps, members of the medical profession, should be similarly taken advantage of. There are other reasons, too, such as the "security" of teaching and the pension plans many teachers found were available. Of course, many other occupations have now bypassed teachers in what they offer workers in both these areas, as well as many others.

In a 1965 ranking of "selected occupations of U. S. males by 1959 annual median earnings" (1960 census data reported in the March, 1965,

with a higher educational attainment than eiewas that of clergymen. In the 51 occupations ranked between secondary and elementary sci.ool background, except for social worlers, with 16.6 and welfare workers. The only occupational group mentary school teachers and which ranked lower teachers, none had a comparable educational lions. Locomotive engineers ranked 38th; railroad wrights, 107th. Elementary school teachers ranked laries, mail carriers, actors, policemen, and social Monthly Labor Review), physicians ranked first, secondary school teachers, 117th, and elementary school teachers, 168th, in a listing of 321 occupaconductors, 54th; pharmacists, 55th; salesmen and sales clerks in wholesale trade, 98th, and millbelow such occupations as postal clerks, secreyears average.

Although this study provides the latest official ranking, the teachers position has not changed significantly.





no career can offer so much as teaching"

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in conclusion...

each year, sets goals for himself and his pupils. Those goals, in whatever faculty he An Entered in The Minneypols Teacher in February, 1966, sheds some additional light on the rewards and challenges of teaching. It says, in part: "Every teacher, as he begins teaches, are basically the same--that the pupils will have gained in their ability to think more clearly, to express themselves more clearly, to distinguish between sham and value, and to pursue a problem until it, if not solved, is at least understood.

he will come to understand himself. He will be testing those around him, but he will be "And every teacher, try though he may, will become involved in the social growth of his pupils. As the pupil comes to understand his world, both socially and academically, testing especially his mentors. Life, so lived, retains a fine edge." Ashton-Warner, Sylvia. Teacher. New York: Buntam Books, 1964, 75c. A fine writer and gifted teacher describes her methods teaching Maori children in New Zealand. Barr, Donaid. Who Pushed Humpty Dumpty?
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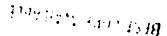
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TABLE 11 Comparative Salaries in Largest AFT and NEA Cities, 1972-73

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information for Calendar year 1973.

